

A Plain Discovery
Of
The UNRIGHETOUS JUDGE
And
FALSE ACCUSER.

Wherein is soberly, and in the fear of the Lord
brought to light, and tendered to the ex-
amination of the Upright in Heart, the
Spirit of that Pamphlet, intituled,
The LEPER Cleansed:

Published by *Richard Ballamy of Tiverton.*

As also,

A clear Vindication of the PRINCIPLES
and PRACTICES of the people by him
charged, from those Reproaches therein heaped
upon them, under the notion of ANABAPTISTS.

Published by *Robert Steed, and Abraham Cheare, Servants of Christ, among his
despised People.*

*Prov. 18.17. He that is first in his own cause, seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and
searcheth him.*

Job 13.7. Wilt thou speak wickedly for god, and talk deceitfully for him?

*Job 31.35, 36, 37. - And that mine adversary had written a book; surely I would take it upon
my shoulder, and binde it as a crown to me; I would declare unto him the number of my steps;
as a prince would I go neer unto him.*

Printed for *Henry Mortlock, at the Phoenix in Paul's Church-yard, neer the little North -door.*

(the following is an excerpt from pages 7 through 17)

Accuser.

And upon serious inquiring into the word, and earnest seeking of God, it pleased the Lord to satisfy me in the truth, and in particular touching these two controverted truths. (1.) That the Covenant of grace stands now in force to the children of believers under the Gospel. (2.) That this is a sufficient ground by Gods appointment why the children of believers should be baptized. This is evident from any Scriptures in the New Testament, which the Anabaptists have endeavoured often to obscure. I shall only mention one which was useful to me, *Acts 2. 34*. The promise is to you, and to your children. The Anabaptists have laboured to darken this truth by perswading the world to believe that children have no right to the promise till they are actually called, which they would infer from the last clause of the forementioned Text. But by considering I saw their mistake in the Text [*call*] hath not relation to children, but to them afar off.

Answer.

We account it not our concernment, nor worth our while, to inform the Reader, with what might be truly said to discover the falsehood of the accusers plausible insinuation, by what direct meanes, and with what mature consideration he digested those grounds of satisfaction: but letting him pass with his desired applause, shall only crave the exercise of Christian patience while we follow him, laying down in plainness our perswasions about the severals by him hinted at in this point of Baptisme; he first give you two propositions as the ground of his satisfaction.

First that the Covenant of grace stands now in force to the children of believers under the Gospel. Secondly, that this is a sufficient ground by Gods appointment why they should be baptised. Many mistakes usually perplex the point in question for want of a right understanding of the termes made use of: which inconvenience we shall endeavour to remove out of the way, before we goe farther: and the terme or expression that comes first to hand to be explained is [*the Covenant of Grace.*] This terme is applyed to signifie,

1. The Covenant of Grace in its own nature, singly, and universally considered.

2. It's applied to signify the manner of its administration, according to divine institution.

As to the first signification of the Covenant of Grace signifieth. That great mystery of the mercy of God in Christ, wherein the Father hath established Jesus Christ his Son, the head of all things, and given unto him a blessed seed of the Sons of Men, to be by him, and with him heires of the glorious inheritance of the grace of God, and the blessed consequences thereof, against all possibilities of miscarriage, according to his eternal purpose. This Covenant was by the Lord himself first published to man in Paradise, *Gen. 3. 15. I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heele.* This Covenant is spoke by the Prophet *David, Psal. 2. 7. I will declare the decree, the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* Vers. 8. *Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession,* Vers. 9. *Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces as a potters vessel.* This Covenant, is it which *Isaiah* publisheth

and preacheth, Chap. 42. and 49. and elswere frequently. This Covenant God calls his everlasting Covenant, being still one and the same immutable from everlasting to everlasting. This Covenant was it which at sundry times, and after divers manners under diverse signes, figures, and types, by promises and prophecies was renewed and ratified with the blessed Patriarches, *Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Sam, Melchisedeck,* and with the Fathers *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*; with *Moses*, with *David* the king and with the Prophets, before the coming of Christ: and it is the same Covenant, which openly and plainly was brought to light, and revealed in all the mysteries of it by *John the Baptist*, the Lord Jesus, and his apostles, which still continueth to be ministred in the Church, and shall continue without change to the worlds end. This Covenant hath one Spiritual Father, which is Christ, *Isaiah 9. 6. The Mighty God, the everlasting Father*; and one spiritual seed, *Psal. 22.30. A seed shall serve him it shall be accounted to the Lord for a Generation.*

2. The Covenant ministring.

The Covenant of grace as it signifieth the manner of administration, according to divine appointment, may be thus described. It doth contain the whole and every part of that instituted worship, whereby God doth ordinarily bring about, the purposes of the everlasting Covenant, that is to set Christ upon his throne, and to gather to him the seed given him by his Father: And the Covenant of grace under this acceptance is not one and the same alwayes, but hath passed under many great alterations and changes: the Lord hating his ordinances and appointmens, to the persons, seasons, and workes, which he had to doe, as it seemed good to his heavenly wisdom: and therefore all the force and authority of the Covenant of Grace, considered under this head, to wit, according to the administration of it, dependeth intirely upon the law of its institution, and is in force as that law directeth and not otherwise.

And the Covenant of Grace in this sence stands distinguished in Scripture, under two known heads, respecting two seasons, the season before the ascention of the Son of God, and the season which followed after.

The ministring before Christ.

The administration of the Covenant of grace, before the coming of the Son of God, passed under very great alterations and changes, the first two thousand years from *Adam* to *Abraham*, the ordinances and forme of worship then in practice, and other occasional figures, having respect unto the mystery of the everlasting Covenant, and the chosen and rejected seeds therein considered, was a ministry dignified, with as eminent and glorious saints, as any the book of God recordeth; and although this ministry were also for the nature of it, the same with the law of *Moses*, and proportioned to it, and afterward fell in with it, yet in all this long track of time, there was no distinguishing ordinance to be administred to infants of believers, or any known doctrine to that purpose, notwithstanding the far-fetcht notions, which some have wandered after, to finde it out from that passage of the Sons of God and daughters of men, *Gen. 6. 2.* Which very probably was found in the family of holy *Seth*, in that time of universal corruption of all man-kinde. Nor in that other of the saving of Noah, and his family, in the Arke; neither of which nor any other thing was,

or was deemed to be an ordinance established in the Church, to be administered in infancy.

True it is, at circumcision it began, and by the law of *Moses*, Circumcision was taken in with the other institutions which went before it, and there it received its full enstalment, and became the head-ordinance of the Levitical ministry. This administration of the Covenant of grace is usually called in Scripture the old Covenant, or the first Covenant, *Heb. 8. 7. For if that first Covenant had been faultless, &c. Ver.*

13. In that he saith a new Covenant, he hath made the first old. It is also usually called the law, *Rom. 4. 13, 14. For the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith; for if they which are of the law, (to wit, the people of the old covenant) be heirs, faith is made void. (to wit, the people of the new Covenant.) And Heb. 10. 1. The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, &c. Gal. 4.21. Ye that desire to be under the law, doe ye not hear the Law?*

This Covenant, while it stood, although it were very glorious, yet the Spirit of God never exalted it in dignity above the degree of an Handmaid, appointed for the time being to minister to the everlasting Covenant, and then to be utterly cast out of the Church, together with her seed according to the flesh, whome the Apostle calleth servants, and not sons, *Gal. 4. 7.* All which we have prophetically, yet plainly and fully instanced in the family of *Abraham*, under the type of the Gospel-Church, under the persons of *Hagar* and *Ishmael*, *Gen. 21. 10, 11, 12.* *Cast out this bond-woman, and her son; for the son of this bond woman shall not be heir with my son, with Isaac, &c.*

The mystery of this Scripture the Apostle unvaileth at large, *Gal. 4.22, --31.* Where he sheweth that the two women, ver. 24. under an allegory, are the two Covenants, the bondage Covenant, and the free Covenant, vers. 25, 26. that is the law and the Gospel; and that the *Isaacs* were the true seed of the Gospel-administration, vers. 28. called the children of the promise; and saith the Apostle, such was himself, and all the Churches of *Galatia*, to whom he wrote, vers. 31. Not borne after the flesh as was *Ishmael*, vers. 23. but borne where there were no possibilities of nature, to bring forth

a seed; even by the power of God, and spirit of adoption, vers. 5, 6, 7. By a mother which in the other respect was altogether barren and desolate, vers. 27. *Rejoyce thou barren that beareth not*, &c. that is, shee was in no such marriage-Covenant, whereby children should be brought forth unto her, as were the children of the former marriage-Covenant; but in that respect being left absolutely destitute, should yet have many more children, then that Covenant had which brought forth children by fleshly generation.

Again, this old administration, the Spirit of God. *Heb. 8.5. Termed a service unto the example and shadow of heavenly things*, And Chap. 9. vers 9. *a figure for the time then present*. And in Chap. 7. v. 19. and cha. 10. v. 1. *That is made nothing perfect*.

And that it was by the Lord Jesus blotted out as an hand-writing of ordinances, that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his Cross, *Col. 2. 24*. There ended that Covenant; there expired the law, the force and authority upon which that administration stood. And there was the prophesie, *Gen. 21. 10*. of casting out the seed according to the flesh (never more to claime a priviledge

upon that account) absolutely accomplished and fulfilled. And thenceforth the children of the promise are counted for the seed, *Rom.* 9.8.

Two hard shifts are made use of by some to avoid the evidence of these, and the like scriptures against infant-baptisme, which might be alleged tot the same effect.

Obj. 1. First, they say, that what hath been alledged from *Gen.* 24. and *Gal.* 4.

Tendeth only to prove, that the legal Covenant and carnal seed, as it stood priviledged by that Covenant, was to give way to the free Gospel-Covenant.

Rep. 1. To this we say, That the Covenant of the law, and the covenant made with *Abraham* in the letter of circumcision had with them an eminent renovation, and ratification of the everlasting covenant; yet were both of one and the same nature, authority, and use, *John* 7.33. *Acts* 15.5. Although not given together; as neither were the ordinances of sacrificing; and all alike signified, and served unto the same heavenly mystery of the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

2. We close with then herein, and crave no more from these Scriptures then the total abolishing of the legal covenant, with all its appearances, of which circumcision was a chief, as hath been proved.

3. We say that the exclusion of the seed, according to the flesh, upon the account of the exclusion of that covenant, excludes the seed according to the flesh for ever, because it can claime a standing by no other right.

Obj. 2. It is also suggest, that the Scriptures alledged uno the point of the two covenants, and the two seeds in them respectively priviledged, is not to be understood of any others intended by the seed of the free woman, then of real or invisible saints, and not of the visible subjects of the Gospel church.

Rep. To which we say, That if the Spirit of God hath made use of these discoveries as a standard and rule, to reformed and conforme visible Churches unto, both in the their doctrine and practice; and that also upon occasion of the corruptions, which by the imposing of the legal covenant and natural seed had invaded them, as is most evident to have been the case, *Acts* 15. 5.--10. If no such matter at all concerning invisible

saints, any otherwayes considered then in visible Church-order, be to be found in the scope and intention of the Apostle; which also is evident: then let no person give up their reason and understanding to such impertinent and incoherent interpretations, against the plain drift of the Spirit of God, and the work of reformation therein pursued. And thus much of the Covenant of Grace, before the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh; wherein we would not be understood, in what hath been said touching the abrogation of the legal covenant, to teach the abrogation of any moral Doctrine or precept.

The Ministry by Christ.

The last administration of the covenant of grace, usually called the new covenant, is that which was established by Jesus Christ at his coming, which was altogether of another nature to that which went before it. This was not a covenant ministring or serving to any doctrine above or beyond itself, as was the other, *Heb.* 10. 1. But this was the mystery of the grace of God itself plainly administered: a mystery hid from ages and generations, *Colos.* 1. 26. *Ephes.* 3. 8, 9. It was under a vaile or behind a

curtain till Christ himself came to reveal it; and the whole scope of the doctrine preached by Christ and his Apostles, runs quite beside the pretended privilege of the seed after the flesh, and is placed upon the seed after the spirit, as being indeed the true seed, who were really stated by God in the privilege of the everlasting covenant through their new-birth, and not otherwise. Mark the preaching and practice of *John the Baptist*, *Matth. 3. 8, 9. Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance and think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham as to our father.* Observe the doctrine of Christ, upon what foundation he builds the Gospel-Church *Matth. 16. 18.* Upon the profession of actual faith in the Son of God. The birth-privilege cannot be squared by this rule, to have a place in this building. Again *Isaiah 54. 13.* Prophesying of the Gospel-Church, sayeth, *And all they children shall be taught of God,* is applied by Christ, *John 6. 44, 45.* with this introduction, *No man can come to me except the father which sent me draw him, &c.* There is no coming unto Christ nor sonship in in the Church upon birth-privilege any longer. Again, *Luke 14. 26. If any man come to me, and hate not his father, &c. he cannot be my disciple;* here is no room for birth-

priviledg to make disciples to Christ, or upon that title to come unto him. Gospel-priviledges are a part of the Gospel-inheritance, and follow Gospel-sonship. *If sons, then heires, Gal. 4. 7. Rom. 8. 17.* Now Gospel-sons are not born such, of the will of the flesh, but of the will of God; *Of his own will begat he us, James 1. 18.* and therefore the visible profession hereof must be the common principle to continue visible children of the Gospel-covenant, under the administration of Jesus Christ, by whom grace and truth was administered, not flesh and figure.

Thus much of the first terme, that came to hand in our opponents first proposition [the Covenant of Grace.] The next expression to be explained, is [stands now in force.]

It seemeth to us an hard kinde of expression, to say, that *the Covenant of Grace stands now in force:* as if it were capable of being or not being in force, with respect to seasons: but thus we understand our opponents meaning by this terme, that it signifieth a person to be comprised, and stated in the covenant of grace by God.

Another expression craving explanation, is [the children of beleivers under the Gospel] which in our opponents intention, we take not to be such children as were begotten

unto the faith by beleevers, and in that respect came under that appellation, of which we read, 1 Cor. 4. 15. 3. *Epist. Joh. ver. 4.* But we understand it of the children begotten of the bodies of beleevers; and in the same sense and no other, we ourselves crave to be understood throughout this reply, by the terms of carnal, or natural seed, seed after the flesh, seed of the birth-privildge: which caution we premise, that these therms made use of by us be not applied to signify some evil qualification.

The second proposition needeth not have any thing farther said unto, it being dependant upon the first, and must stand and fall with it.

These things premised, we return answer to these this two propositons, viz. (1) that the Covenant of grace stands now in force to the children of beleevers under the Gospel. (2) That this is a sufficient ground by God's appointment, why children of beleevers should be baptized.

And first, We say, If by this term [the Covenant of Grace] in his first proposition, be meant the Covenant of Grace in our first acceptation of it; and by [the children of

beleevers under the Gospel] be meant their natural seed, as before explained: Then we deny the first Proposition, because the Covenant of grace in that sense, is not in force to any, upon any other consideration, then as they are in Christ. Then also is the second Proposition to be denyed; because God hath made no such appointment, that Baptism should be administered to persons upon the single ground of election.

If the Covenant of grace be meant of the covenant of grace ministring according to our second acceptation: then, if it be also meant *to be in force*, &c. by vertue of some institution, appointed of God before the coming of Christ; we deny the second proposition, that that is any sufficient ground by Gods appointment of Baptizing infants now; such institutions being vanished with the other shadows.

If by the Covenant of Grace, be meant the Covenant of grace as it is now ministered since the coming of Christ; we also deny the same proposition in this particular, that there can be found no such appointment instituted by Christ, or any of his Apostles, for the baptising of the children of beleevers.

Last of all, we say, That the Covenant of Grace is always in force to the elect as such, called or uncalled, infants or aged; it is also in force to all sorts of persons, as it is a doctrine by Gods appointment to be published for the calling of sinners to repentance; but we utterly deny that there is any thing at all in force by the covenant of grace, or by any appointment of God, for the baptizing of infants.

The ordinance of Baptism, is a part of the instituted worship of the Gospel, and all the force and authority that it hath upon the Conscience in point of practise, is to be derived from the plain and express law and word of God, by which it is made an Ordinance of the gospel: and that in point of practice must be the Rule not to be swerved from. God hath been very jealous of all his Ordinances, to keep them exactly to his own methods and manner, in the practise of them: and the nature of man is very presumptuous to be interposing and meddling. Let us not forget that *Heb.* 8. 5. *Exod.* 25. 9.--40. See that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount: all instituted worship, must be conformed to the heavenly pattern.

But to follow our opponent in the proof of his propositions. *This is evident* (saith he) *from many Scriptures in the New Testament*, and so gives you an instance in that one, *Acts 2. 39.* and then fairly leaves you to make the application as you please, without managing his authority to prove any one point or term, in either of his propositions.

But the next work we find him upon, is an impertinent, confused accusation, that the *Anabaptists* obscure and darken Scripture, and perswade the world, that children have no right to the promise till they are actually called. Wherein we shall use some patience to bear his abuses and frothy traverses, to give an answer as God shall inable.

Our sence of the Scripture alleadged is this: That ver. 39. hath a necessary and plain coherence, with verses 37, 38. wherein we have an inquiry of the Jew wounded in conscience for sin, and the Apostles full and comfortable resolution of the case, to this effect; that God hath made his precious promise in Christ, to Jew and Gentile, of pardoning repenting sinners, and of giving to them the holy spirit; and that in this grace and promise, the Jew and his children had a precedency, and priority to all other people: and therefore they repenting and being baptised. Should receive the mercy

promised. This resolution of this Scripture, is not only pertinent to the case, but also very coherent with itself, and consonant to other Scriptures. It was a pertinent point for comfort to the Jew, that grace was tendred to all, that all scruple from personal incapacity, might be removed by such rich mercy; and it was an additional comfort, that the tender of this grace was specially reserved, to be made to the Jew and his children, before any others; as is elsewhere also declared, *Rom. 2. 10. Acts 13. 26, 46.* But withal it was profitable to inform the Jew (who boasted much of his birth-priviledg) that although he had a priority in the tender, yet as to the grace itself, he was but in a parity and likeness with all others; that a right frame of spirit, might keep him from being puffed up, under a mistake of that wherein his Interest lay: and this also we have elsewhere frequently instanced, *Gal. 3. 28. Rom. 3. 29, 30. Eph. 4. 5, 6, 7.* And that therefore the same common requisite, of Faith and Repentance, in order to Baptism, must be found alike in all persons, that would partake in the benefit of this grace indeed, *Mar. 16. 15, 16. He that beleeveth and is baptised, &c.* this is the Doctrine that Christ commanded to be preached to every creature for salvation, and

this is the order by which it should inure to every creature, first that they repent, and then that they be baptised. And let not your mindes be shifted aside from this truth, by a pretence that the Spirit of God, in these and such-like places of Scripture, is onely to be understood of an invisible work of grace, in the hearts of the saints, and not of the principle upon which the Gospel-Church was to have its constitution. (Of which you have formerly in like case been warned.) (1.) **Mat. 3. 12.** Jesus Christ came to gather the true seed into his granary the Church, and not the chaff, and his fanne, the Gospel-administration, was fitted as a fanne to doe the thing according to the doctrine held forth; he came not to set up a Church after the Jewish principle, of a natural generation of the sons of men, but by spiritual regeneration to be made the Sons of God, and therefore tells Peter, that he will build his new Church upon the rock of personal profession. And (2.) **Mar. 16. 18.** who shall presume to lay a right in natural generation, as a principle to give an enterance into the visibility of the Church, of which there is not one title to be found in all the New Testament, from Christ or any Apostle? while in the mean time the Scriptures of the Prophets, and all the New

Testament, doe everywhere abound with evidences that run upon a supposition of a real profession of a work of grace, as the state of the Gospel-Church: and many passages against the principle of a seed according to the flesh, the principle of the bondage covenant, as hath been premised.

2. Whereas he chargeth us with *perswading the world to believe that children have no right to the promise, til they are actually called*. It is a very odious and false suggestion, the man was ill instructed to publish it: this we say, that a right to the promise, doth not conclude a right to be baptised. We affirme that children have a right to the promise as well as the aged; but to have a right to be baptised, is not given to old or young, till the rule of the word be complied with according to which baptisme is to be administered.